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AUTHOR Webster, David S.
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ABSTRACT

Based on the assumption that more affluent colleges can attract more able students, a study was undertaken to find exceptions to this rule. It looked for affluent colleges that are relatively unselective and less affluent colleges that are selective. The purpose was to understand how college characteristics are related to selectivity. A "selective" school is defined as one in which freshman combined SAT scores are 1075 or above, and "unselective" colleges have scores under 850. An "affluent" college spends $3500 or more per student on educational and general expenditures; a "poor" college spends under $2000. These criteria are based on HEGIS data. Twenty-five colleges are categorized as highly selective, poor; 42, as unselective, affluent institutions. In the first category, 88 percent are independent and all are predominantly white. In the second category, 50 percent are independent and only 36 percent are white. Geographic location, highest degree offered, and program emphasis are examined, and the regional and financial availability of private versus public institutions is discussed. Characteristics of individual colleges that cause them to fall within the categories studied are analyzed; some "surprises" are noted. It is concluded that the relationship between affluence and selectivity is much more complex than anticipated. It is also suggested that the criteria used, and the methods for calculating them, are not ideal, therefore limiting the scope and accuracy of the study. Further research is recommended. (MSE)

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN

COLLEGE AFFLUENCE AND COLLEGE SELECTIVITY

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David S. Webster
Chancellor's Intern Fellow
UCLA

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INTRODUCTION

It is widely assumed that those colleges and universities with the most educational resources are the "best" institutions, and that colleges with highly paid professors, low student-faculty ratios, expensive laboratory equipment, and well-stocked libraries are "better" than those without these amenities. And despite some evidence to the contrary, it is widely assumed that the best colleges -- that is, those which spend the most money per student for their faculty, library, laboratory facilities, and the like -- will be sought out by the best students, leading to a high correlation between the amount of money a college spends on its educational "program" per student and the quality of its students.[1]

Assuming that there is a positive correlation between the affluence[2] of a college and the ability of the students it attracts, this paper seeks to examine the outstanding exceptions to this rule, and to study those colleges which are either quite affluent and also quite unselective, or are quite poor, in

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[1]There is some evidence, surprising as it may seem, that a college's educational and general expenditures per student actually have a negative effect on student achievement, and that thus students wishing to learn as much as possible should not go to colleges with high per-student educational expenditures (see, for example, A.W. Astin, "Undergraduate Achievement and Institutional 'Excellence,'" Science, August, 1968, pp. 661-668). However, this finding is not part of the folklore of higher education, and students and their parents seldom esteem colleges because they spend little on educational resources.

[2]"Affluence," as used in this paper, is defined as

terms of money spent on their students' education, and at the same time highly selective. By examining these "outliers," and seeing what characteristics those in each group have in common, we may be able to determine how some colleges get "more bang for the buck" -- that is, while spending little money they can still enroll highly able students. At the same time, we will look at the characteristics of colleges that spend a great deal of money per student and still attract students of modest abilities, and see what characteristics these colleges have in common. Finally, we will see how far these data can take us in understanding the relationship between what a college spends and how selective it can be in choosing its students.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this paper, a "selective" college is one where the combined SAT verbal and math scores of the entering freshmen, according to the HEGIS data file for fiscal year 1973, were 1075 or higher, and an unselective college is one where the entering freshmen's combined scores were below 850. An "affluent" college is one where the educational and general and general expenditures per student, as listed in the same HEGIS data file, were $3500 or more, and a "poor" college is

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"educational and general expenditures per student." Major expenditures not included in this definition are those for student financial aid, for major services such as hospitals and student health services, and for auxiliary enterprises, such as student housing and food services.

one which spent below $2000. The author has found 25 colleges and universities which were "poor" and selective and 39 institutions that were affluent and unselective. These institutions are presented in tables 1 and 2.

Table 1

Colleges that are Highly Selective and Low in Affluence

FICE Code	College	State
1385	Fairfield U.	Conn.
1469	Florida Institute of TEchnology	Fla.
1515	Rollins College	Fla.
1531	Stetson College	Fla.
1749	Roosevelt U.	Ill.
1788	Butler U.	Ind.
1842	Valparaiso U.	Ind.
2078	Loyola U.	Md.
2093	St. John's College	N.M.
2128	Boston College	Mass.
2541	Concordia Teacher's College	Neb.
2704	College of New Rochelle	N.Y.
2722	Fordham U.	N.Y.
2734	Houghton College	N.Y.
3197	Lewis and Clark College	Ore.
3227	Willamette U.	Ore.
3269	Grove City College	Penn.
3330	Pennsylvania State U. (Allentown campus)	Penn.
3367	St. Joseph's College	Penn.
3651	U. of Dallas	Tex.
3686	Goddard C.	Vt.
3805	College of William and Mary	Va.
3948	San Francisco Art Institute	Ca.
7104	U. of Miami	Fla.
9640	St. Francis de Sales College	Wis.

Table 2

Colleges that are not Selective but High in Affluence

FICE Code	College	State
1046	Talladega College	Ala.
1050	Tuskegee C.	Ala.
1072	Cochise C.	Ari.
1443	Gallaudet C.	D.C.
1448	Howard University	D.C.
1559	Clark C.	Ga.
1571	Georgia Military C.	Ga.
1968	Kentucky State C.	Ky.
2106	U. of Maryland, EAstern Shore campus	Md.
2157	Hebrew C.	Mass.
2298	Nazareth C.	Mich.
2434	Saints J.C.	Miss.
2439	Tougaloo C.	Miss.
2498	Park C.	Mo.
2656	New Mexico Military Institute	N.M.
2773	Mills College of Education	N.Y.
2909	Barber-Scotia C.	N.C.
2911	Bennett C.	N.C.
3290	Lincoln U.	Penn.
3310	Penn Hall J.C.	Penn.
3417	Allen U.	S.C.
3462	Freeman J.C.	S.D.
3490	Fisk U.	Tenn.
3470	Big Bend C.C.	Wash.
4611	Kansas Technical Institute	Kan.
5320	Cape Fear Technical Institute	N.C.
6836	Motlow State C.C.	Tenn.
6957	Washington TEchnical Institute	D.C.
7015	Federal City C.C.	D.C.
7582	Aims C.C.	Colo.
8145	Nashville State Technical Institute	Tenn.
8175	Howard C.C.	Md.
8558	Beaufort County Technical Institute	N.C.
8611	Hostos C.C.	N.Y.
8841	College of the Virgin Islands	V.I.
9160	Rappahannock C.C.	Va.
9225	Texas State TEchnical Institute	Tex.
9256	Moraine Park Technical Institute	Wis.
9933	Texas State Technical Institute, mid-continent campus	Tex.

We will consider these two groups of disparate colleges and universities in terms of a number of variables -- control, geographical area, location in or near a big city, student body racial composition, level of highest degree offered, and curricular emphasis.

CONTROL

Of the 25 highly selective, low-affluence colleges, 22 (88%) are independently controlled. Only two are public, according to HEGIS data -- Pennsylvania State University at Allentown and William and Mary. Of the 42 unselective, high-affluence colleges, however, exactly half are public. It seems probable that the various states -- even the poorest states -- are able to fund their colleges at sufficiently high levels that they are too wealthy for the least affluent group. Another possible explanation is that when a state college is very limited in resources, it is so little sought after by students that it will scarcely ever have the luxury of being highly selective. A private college, on the other hand, even though it has limited resources, may have other features -- a certain mission or curriculum, for example--that manages to attract students despite the college's scant resources.

It is hard to know what to make of the two public colleges that are highly selective but not affluent. So far as Pennsylvania State U. at Allentown is conerned, it seems, according to

the various college guides, relatively indistinguishable from the other 16 Penn State campuses that offer the first two years of a four-year program. So far as William and Mary goes, it does have about 3000 (expensive to educate) graduate students, at least a small program in the costly physical sciences, and its faculty compensation, according to the 1974 edition of Cass and Birnbaum's Comparative Guide to American Colleges, is "above national average." (p. 705). In short, it is hard to see why it can get by spending very little money per student.

So far as the highly selective but less-than-affluent private institutions are concerned, eight of the 25 (32%) are Roman Catholic schools. Since about 10% of all the colleges and universities in the United States are Roman CAtholic-sponsored, this means that these schools are quite over-represented here. They are as follows:

Fairfield U. (Conn.)
Loyola C. (Md.)
Boston C. (Mass.)
College of New Rochelle (N.Y.)
Fordham (N.Y.)
St. Joseph's (Penna.)
U. of Dallas (Tex.)
St. Francis de Sales C. (Wis.)

Since a very large proportion of the faculty and administrators at these schools are normally members of the clergy, and work for little more than room, board, pocket money, and what California Governor Jerry Brown calls "psychic rewards," possibly these clerics, driven by their mission to get their students' heads into heaven and heaven into their heads, are willing to work

harder -- for example, in the case of professors, to teach more courses -- than their counterparts at secular colleges, and costs can be minimized. At the same time, these schools' attractiveness to Catholic college students or their parents who devoutly want a Catholic education, and the fact that nearby parochial schools may serve as "feeders," channelling large numbers of students to them every year, may make them able to attract bright students even if they cannot compete with other colleges in the area in terms of resources. It is noteworthy that five of these Roman Catholic schools -- Fairfield, Loyola, Boston College, Fordham, and St. Joseph's -- are conducted by the Society of Jesus. The most plausible explanation for the Jesuit schools' dominance of this category is not that they are any cheaper to run that other Catholic schools, but that they are perhaps "better" and attract students good enough to move them into the "highly selective" category. Perhaps most non-Jesuit CAtholic schools are not selective enough, regardless of how impecunious they are, to fall into the low-affluence, highly selective group.

RACE

Of the 25 high selective, low-affluence colleges, all are mostly white. Of the 39 unselective, high-affluence colleges, 24 (64%) are mostly black. These mostly black colleges are as follows:

Talladega (Ala.)
Tuskegee (Ala.)
Howard (D.C.)
Clark (Ga.)
Kentucky State U. (Ky.)
U. of Maryland, Eastern Shore (Md.)
Saints J.C. (Miss.)
Tougaloo C. (Miss.)
Barber-Scotia (N.C.)
Bennett (N.C.)
Lincoln U. (Penna.)
Allen U. (S.C.)
Fisk U. (Tenn.)
Federal C.C. (D.C.)

It is far from clear why some black colleges fall into this category and not others. For example, Lincoln University in Pennsylvania is on the list, which could be explained by the fact that a northern state might be more willing to support a mostly black college than some southern states (for example, not a single one of the fourteen mostly black colleges listed above is located in Florida or Texas, both of which have many black colleges). But if that is the case, it is hard to explain why Pennsylvania's <u>other</u> black college (Cheyney State) is not listed, and why the United States' other two northern, mostly black colleges (Ohio's Wilberforce and Central State) are not.

And it is surprising to see Atlanta's Clark College among this group. It is part of the six-member Atlanta University Center, a consortium of four undergraduate colleges, a graduate school and a professional school that is very similar in organization to California's Claremont colleges, and one would think that because of its membership in this consortium it should be able to spend <u>less</u> than many comparable black colleges. Assuming

that Clark does legitimately belong in this category, why do not its fellow schools in the consortium, Morehouse and Spelman? It cannot be because they are not as selective as Clark -- according to the college guides, they are considerably more selective. So it must be because they spend less. But why do they spend less? And, if they do spend less, why do they attract considerably brighter students than does Clark? The information available is not sufficient to answer these questions.

Another anomaly is North Carolina's Barber-Scotia College. This unfortunate institution has, according to the HEGIS file, combined SAT verbal and math scores of 540, almost 100 points lower than those of the next lowest-scoring black college. Since it is highly affluent, why does it attract students with such poor board scores, or rather, why does it attract few students except those with such wretched board scores? It cannot be that it spends a lot of money because it is brand-new and faced with high "start up" costs; it is more than 100 years old. It cannot be because it is tiny; it has more than 500 full-time students, more than St. John's in New Mexico, which is on the high-selectivity, low-affluence list, and more than several other black colleges which are not on the high-affluence list. It cannot be because it is located in a metropolitan area where expenses are very high, or in an area so isolated that no competent students are to be found mo matter how much it spends -- it is located 22 miles from bustling Charlotte, North Carolina. The reason for the huge disparity between Barber-Scotia's affluence and selectivity

is thus hard to determine.

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF COLLEGES

It seems plausible that a college's geographical location -- the section of the United States in which it's situated -- may influence the relationship between its affluence and its selectivity. It is not at all clear, though, what direction this influence might take. One could conjecture that colleges in the sunbelt might be able to spend less money to achieve the same level of excellence as colleges in the north, since sunbelt colleges would pay less for fuel, insulation, building construction, snow removal, and the like. Conversely, one could argue that in the northeast, where the competition from public higher education is weaker than elsewhere, some private colleges should be able to attract competent students without spending as much as they would have to in the public-college dominated sunbelt.

One might argue that in New England, where private colleges have a long and venerable history, a college can, despite spending relatively little, attract able students on the basis of a pretty campus, tradition, and its loyal alumni sending their children to it. Conversely, one could argue that in the West, because there are so few alternatives to public education, a college spending only modest amounts of money, if located in an attractive area -- say, Occidental in the Los Angeles area or Colorado College in Colorado Springs -- might be able to attract able children of the wealthy or of those who ideologically favor private education, precisely because there is little non-public competition.

One might think that colleges in large cities would have such high expenditures because of their urban location that they could not possibly be both selective and low in affluence. But if a school were located in a remote area, although its expenses might be low, especially for faculty and staff salaries, possibly it could not attract enough bright students for it to be on the highly selective, low-affluence list. Perhaps a school in the suburbs or exurbs of a big city might be the best situated to get good students relative to its expenditures. But America's suburbs and exurbs, on the whole, have wealthier residents than its central cities and rural areas, and thus a suburban college's clientele might be so well-off that it could charge high fees, giving it enough money to keep it out of the highly selective, low-affluence group. In short, it is hard to predict how geographical location might affect a college's selectivity and wealth.

Ideally, one should examine colleges in several regions of the country and according to several levels of population density, but we have too few colleges to make fine distinctions. Rather, we will consider colleges according to whether they are in the "sunbelt" or "snowbelt" and according to whether or not they are located in or within 10 miles of a big city, defining "big city" as one with more than 600,000 people.

Of the 25 highly selective, low-affluence colleges, seven (28%) are in the southern rim states generally called the sunbelt. Of the unselective, high affluence colleges, 12 of 19 (31%) are in the sunbelt. Clearly, there is no significant difference.

Considering whether or not a college is located in a large city, we find of the highly selective, low-affluence colleges that eight of the 25 (32%) are located in such cities. They are as follows:

Roosevelt U. (Chicago)
Loyola College (Baltimore)
Boston College (Boston)
Fordham U. (New York City)
St. Joseph's College (Philadelphia)
San Francisco Art Institute (San Francisco)
U. of Miami (Miami)
Butler U. (Indianapolis)

Of the 39 colleges that are not selective and are high in affluence, only six (15%) are in such areas:

Gallaudet College (D.C.)
Federal City College (D.C.)
Washington Technical Institute (D.C.)
Hostos C.C. (New York City)
Mills College of Education (New York City)
Clark College (Atlanta)

Since more than twice as many highly selective, low-affluence colleges are located in or near big cities, and since the former group is distributed among eight difference cities while the latter group clusters in only three, we may conclude that the large number of potential students in large urban areas, combined perhaps with the attractiveness of these areas themselves, make colleges located in these cities more likely than others to be able to attract capable students while keeping expenditures down.

HIGHEST DEGREE OFFERED BY AN INSTITUTION

The two groups of colleges considered in this report are distributed very differently with regard to the highest degree they offer, as TAble 3 shows:

Table 3

Highly selective colleges that are low in affluence

Ph.D. the highest degree offered (12%)

Boston College
Fordham University
U. of Miami

B.A. or M.A. the highest degree offered (84%)

21 institutions

A.A. the highest degree offered (4%)

Pennsylvania State University (Allentown campus)

Unselective colleges that are high in affluence

Ph.D. the highest degree offered (3%)

Howard University

B.A. or M.A. the highest degree offered (46%)

18 colleges

A.A. the highest degree offered (51%)

20 colleges

The universities that are highly selective but low in affluence have three factors in common. First, two of them are Roman Catholic (both, in fact, Jesuit) institutions, and we already have discussed how Catholic schools, especially those run by the Jesuit order, are particularly well-favored for keeping expenses down while still attracting bright students. Second, though all three schools grant doctorates, they confer only a very small percentage of them -- and, presumably, enroll only a very small proportion of expensive doctoral candidates -- relative to their student body. According to the 1973 edition of Comparative Guide to American Colleges, here is their total number of students enrolled in all their programs and their doctorates granted in 1972.

Institution	Ph.D.s granted, 1972	Total enrollment	Ph.Ds granted as % of total enrollment
Boston College	56	11,787	.48%
Fordham	118	13,856	.85
Miami	80	14,465	.55

These institutions were thus able to support doctoral programs while spending relatively little because their doctoral programs, relative to their total enrollment, were tiny.

Finally, all three of these universities are located in large metropolitan areas -- Boston, New York City, and Miami -- and we have already seen that such a location is especially conducive to an institution's being able to attract bright students while keeping expenses down.

Except for these three schools, all the other highly selective, low affluence schools grant the bachelor's or master's as their highest degree, except for Penn State at Allentown, which is an anomaly here as in so many other ways. Clearly, schools that grant only the A.A. simply don't attract enough bright students to be in this category, no matter how little they spend.

Considering those colleges that are highly affluent and still unselective, only one -- Howard -- offers a Ph.D. The fact that Howard is supported in large measure by the federal government is probably one reason why it spends as much as it does. And the fact that bright black students in the last decade or so have had attractive offers from the nation's most prestigious schools makes it hard for Howard to be really selective. The other colleges in this group are about equally divided between those which grant the B.A. or M.A. (18) and those which grant only the A.A. (20). So while the low-affluence, highly selective colleges were clustered among those granting the B.A. or M.A. (21 of 25, or 84%), the high affluence, low selectivity colleges are almost evenly split between those offering the B.A. or M.A. on the one hand and the A.A. on the other.

CURRICULAR EMPHASIS

Of the 25 highly selective, low-affluence colleges, 20 (80%) offer a more or less standard liberal arts program, and often some pre-professional programs -- education, business, and the like -- as well. Five (20%) offer curricula that could be considered "special." They are as follows:

Program	College
Technical	Florida Institute of TEchnology (Fla.)
"Great Books"	St. John's (N.M.)
Teachers College	Concordia Teachers College (Neb.)
Art Institute	San Francisco Art Institute (Cal.)
Seminary	St. Francis de Sales College (Neb.)

Of the 39 unselective, high-affluence schools, 25 (64%) have liberal arts or liberal arts and pre-professional programs, and 14 (36%) have special programs. These are as follows:

Program	College
Vocational	Kansas Technical Institute (Kan.)
	Washington TEchnical Institute (D.C.)
	Cape Fear TEchnical Institute (N.C.)
	Nashville State Technical Institute (Tenn.)
	Beaufort County TEchnical Institute (N.C.)
	Texas State Technical Institute, Rio Grande
	Moraine Park TEchnical Institute (Wis.)
	Texas State TEchnical Institute, mid-continent campus
	Motlow State C.C. (Tex).
Military academy	Georgia Military College (Ga.)
	New Mexico Military Institute (N.M.)

Program	College
Seminary	Hebrew College (Mass.)
Teachers College	Mills College of Education (N.Y.)
School for the deaf	Gallaudet College (D.C.)

The colleges in these two curricular groupings offer some surprises. All things considered, St. John's in New Mexico might be considered an inexpensive school to run -- with its Great Books program it does not need an extensive library, and it does not have one (63,000 volumes); only 45% of its tutors have Ph.D.s, and it spends little on research. Still, its very small enrollment (fewer than 400 students) means that it can hardly have the economies of scale that larger -- or, rather, less tiny -- schools have. Even more surprising is Nebraska's Concordia Teachers College, a school which one would scarcely expect to be "highly selective," on the high-selectivity, low-affluence list. According to Barron's Profiles of American Colleges (1976), its composite ACT score is 22, which converts to about 950 in combined SAT scores, lower than virtually all the other schools in this group.

And San Francisco Art Institute would not seem to be a prime candidate to be very selective in terms of verbal and math (as opposed to artistic) aptitude. But the really surprising school on this list is Florida Institute of Technology. Because

technical schools have to pay high salaries to attract faculty, who possess more options than do teachers of the humanities and social sciences, and because they require expensive equipment, one wonders how this school can operate with such low general and educational expenditures. It is located, according to Cass and Birnbaum, "south of Kennedy Space Center" (sixth edition, p. 211). Did FIT acquire, free or very cheaply, the surplus equipment left there when most of the space effort was moved to Houston? Assuming it did, it might have received outstanding equipment to stock its mechanical and electrical engineering programs, but FIT also offers programs in oceanography, physics, and marine biology. How could it have acquired and maintained equipment to teach <u>these</u> expensive programs is not clear.

Looking at the unselective, high-affluence colleges, we see that nine of these fit into the category of the two-year, exclusively technical college. (If these colleges' programs in air conditioning maintenance, data processing, computer programming, and the like cost them so much money, one is all the more puzzled how FIT can get by spending so little). These two-year colleges' combination of students with modest abilities and expensive "hardware" makes them well-suited for this category.

Gallaudet College, which, by the way, has by far the highest expenditure per student in the country ($12,352) is doubtless

in this group by virtue of the fact that its entire student body is deaf. Classes at Gallaudet are no doubt small, instructors specially trained, and the students, because of their impairment, unable to score very high on standardized tests. (Gallaudet students take neither the SAT nor ACT -- at least, neither is required by the school -- but rather the school's own admissions test). It is surprising to see two military academies on this list, especially since they are both two-year colleges (New Mexico Military Institute, in fact, like Massachusetts' Simon's Rock, is a combination prep school and college). It is plausible for the various four-year service academies to spend a lot, with their very expensive staffs, equipment, and materiel, but why two-year military colleges have such high expenditures is not clear. The two remaining schools with special curricula -- Hebrew College, a seminary to train students in Hebrew studies, and Mills College of Education, a teachers college -- both have counterparts on the highly-selective, low-affluence list. This dichotomous representation is puzzling. Hebrew College and Saint Francis de SAles are both rather ordinary seminaries, and it is uncertain why the former should spend a lot to attract mediocre students and the latter should spend less to attract better students. Nor is it clear why Concordia Teachers College gets good students with little expense and Mills College of Education achieves, if that is the word to use, the opposite result.

CONCLUSION

As I look over what I have written, one phrase appears again and again and serves almost as a leitmotif for this report -- the words, "it is not clear." It is clear that we are far from understanding the complex relationship between college affluence and selectivity. For one thing, the numbers that appear on the computer print-out are far from perfect. There may be key-punching errors, imputed scores, estimated scores, "missing cases," and so on. Further, it is doubtful that SAT verbal and math scores, even if they are accurately reported, are an ideal measure of college "selectivity." And there may well be great variability in the accounting procedures and standards that different colleges use to measure their general and educational expenditures. (In one of the appendices of Alexander Astin and Calvin Lee's The Invisible Colleges, for example, one of the authors quotes the amount a college president cited to him as that college's educational expenditure per student and then implies that that figure is hard to believe). And even if the SAT scores and "affluence" figures were perfect, they would be perfect for only one year, and it would certainly be better to average these figures over a period of time to avoid the distortions caused by sampling only one year.

But even if perfectly accurate figures existed, even if those figures truly measured what they are supposed to measure, and they were available for a series of years, one would still know only a fraction of what one would need to know to measure

the relationship between college selectivity and affluence. For one thing, this report has examined only extreme cases. Perhaps the relationship between college affluence and quality is curvilinear, and the relationship that pertains at one or both extremes does not pertain for more "average" schools.

There is still much to be learned about the complex relationship between colleges' affluence and their selectivity.